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SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE

(PURSUANT TO S. RES. 400, 84TH CONGRESS)

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

February 14, 1977

IN REPLY PLEASE
REFER TO R6495

Honorable E. H. Knoche
Acting Director
Central Intelligence Agency
Washington, D.C.

Dear Henry:

The accompanying article in the Manchester Guardian for February 7 suggests that the CIA has covertly supported the building of four strategic airfields in Rhodesia and that Mr. Ian Smith is looking for additional covert American assistance. Would you kindly give us a report on the accuracy of this and any other circumstances that might be pertinent?

With best wishes,

Aloha,



Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman

Enclosure

THE GUARDIAN, February 6, 1977

Smith looking for covert US help

PERHAPS THE only puzzling aspect about Mr Ian Smith's rejection of the new British conference terms was the genuine surprise with which Mr Ivor Richard reacted to the demolition of his hopes for an early return to Geneva.

There are cynics in Salisbury who feel that the conference chairman dramatised his display of deep disappointment to increase the burden of Mr Smith's guilt. One thinks not. Britain's envoy to the United Nations, having spent four weary months on secondment to the Rhodesia conference, was genuinely saddened and hurt by what he regarded as the end of another settlement saga.

Mr Richard was truly convinced that the Rhodesian leader would, at the end of "11 of the best years of our lives," gracefully bow to the historic imperative of decolonisation. Why? Because, as Mr Richard pointed out at Geneva several times, no reasonable politician could commit a dispirited white minority to unending warfare with guerrillas representing a restless, rebellious majority.

This was a miscalculation as fatal as Britain's persistent misreading of white politics in Rhodesia. From the moment that a cold-ridden Mr Smith huskily declared UDI at 1.15 pm on November 11, 1965, he was treated by the British Government as a recalcitrant cousin whose rebellious behaviour could, and would, be tamed by common sense and appeals to reason laced with dire threats of painful punishment if the black sheep refused the comforts of the fold.

Buried deep in the Foreign Office files must be a scribbled memorandum from a departing mandarin who raged against the lunacy of such diplomacy towards the rebel regime. Nothing would or will force Mr Smith, his Cabinet, his white electorate and the army to accept unfettered African rule except for morale-busting pressure of the kind that can break a government's will to resist its own destruction.

The pressure was there last September, applied by South Africa and America, but if Dr Kissinger did not see the gaping loopholes in his enforced settlement terms, then Mr Smith certainly did. He made an agreement with the most powerful nation in the world and he is going to stick to it. More importantly, the Rhodesian security forces will fight for it.

It matters not to Salisbury whether Britain, Africa, or the United Nations

heap abuse on his impending plans to implement the Kissinger agreement unilaterally with so-called African moderates. What does matter is how South Africa reacts to such moves, and on the dour face of Mr John Vorster there is — in Rhodesian eyes — the silent smile of assent.

Beyond South Africa, Mr Smith is looking for covert American assistance that goes to so many nations who see things the way of the Central Intelligence Agency. After all, white Rhodesians argue, is Mr Smith not fighting international communism (no, but he probably soon will be), and who is building those four new undeniably strategic airfields that have emerged in the bush recently? If journalists ask in Salisbury these days about the airfields, officials tend to gaze fixedly at the horizon in a studied silence that mutely frames the reply, "Who do you think? Who else?"

None of this will come as a surprise to such African leaders as President Nyerere of Tanzania who have long looked on in appalled silence as successive British envoys trailed out to Salisbury to tell the Rhodesian Prime

by James MacManus
in Salisbury

Minister that happiness was a hand-over to a black majority. Unfortunately, Mr Smith sees no salvation in the surrender of white power and privilege.

However, such realities did come as a surprise to Mr Richard, who was perhaps a little too forthright for the Foreign Office's taste in recognising the end of the road when he came to it.

Although Whitehall seems to be urging the battered British conference team into further negotiations with Mr Vorster, the Geneva conference cannot be resumed with the "reasonable prospects for success" which the Foreign Secretary requires for second-stage talks in Switzerland. The Rhodesian Government has nailed its colours to the mast which Dr Kissinger so conveniently provided, and there is simply no way that most Rhodesian nationalists or the Organisation of African Unity will accept what they see as a half-way settlement.

Only a massive change of heart by the front-line African states and Mr John Vorster will alter this reality. To settle the matter, Rhodesia's military

commanders have let Mr Smith know that if Mr Smith does contemplate the unthinkable and go back on his rejection, they might ponder the incredible — Africa's first white military coup.

Whither Rhodesia? The Government remains in a precarious position. The security forces are stretched tight and thin. Spirits are reasonably high among the regular forces, but elsewhere morale varies from the "shoot it out to the last cartridge" candidates to the young married couples with small children who are openly fearful of the future. It is the question of morale, rather than of military defeat, that most concerns the authorities.

The emigration rate, totalling a net loss of 6,000 Rhodesians last year, can only get worse. In the industrial and commercial sectors confidence is low as businessmen find themselves caught between fear of radical nationalist rule and a future without an internationally recognised settlement.

Mr Smith is therefore expected to move with reasonable speed to meet at least some requirements of the Kissinger package — abolition of racial discrimination (but not, one notes, the most contentious constitutional requirement to abolish the blatantly unfair division of land between the majority and the minority), and the implementation of a power-sharing, and ultimately power-transferring, transitional government.

The man with whom Mr Smith intends to conduct this exercise, Bishop Abel Muzorewa, has resisted all blandishments to hold any talks with the government. But, in the end, the Bishop may find that he needs Mr Smith as much as the Prime Minister needs him.

"We have never closed the door. It is Wilson who has been doing that for the last four months." Mr Smith said that on March 27, 1966. Substitute Richard for Wilson and exactly the same words characterise the Government's attitude to the constitutional issue. It is always somebody else's fault. Nothing changes. Both Mr Wilson and Mr Richard may reflect on L. P. Hartley's words, which were not written about Rhodesia but might well have been: "The past is another country. They do things differently there."

Roots strikes

Jonathan Steele in Washin
taken the nation by storm

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